



H.R. 2956– To require the Secretary of Defense to commence the reduction of the number of United States Armed Forces in Iraq to a limited presence by April 1, 2008, and for other purposes.

Executive Summary

Speaker Pelosi has promised a “month of action in Congress to end the war, including a vote to redeploy our troops by next spring.” H.R. 2956 directs the Secretary of Defense to reduce the number of troops in Iraq and “transition to a limited presence” within 120 days of the enactment of this Act. The redeployment must be completed by April 1, 2008. The bill does maintain a troop presence in Iraq for security and diplomatic purposes.

The bill also requires the President to present a comprehensive strategy for Iraq that must be presented to Congress by January 1, 2008, and must be updated every 90 days thereafter.

Floor Situation

H.R. 2956 is being considered on the floor pursuant to a closed rule. The rule:

- Provides 4 hours of debate, with 3 hours of debate equally divided and controlled by the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee on Armed Services and 1 hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs.
- Waives all points of order against the bill and its consideration except those arising under clauses 9 (earmarks) and 10 (PAYGO) of Rule XXI.
- Provides one motion to recommit.

This legislation was introduced by Representative Ike Skelton (D-MO) on July 10, 2007. The bill was referred to the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Foreign Affairs, but was not considered.

H.R. 2956 is expected to be considered by the House on July 12, 2007.

Summary

Sec. 2 – Sense of Congress

H.R. 2956 expresses the sense of the House of Representatives that:

- The Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002 (Public Law 107–243), enacted into law on October 16, 2002, authorized the President to use the Armed Forces as the President determined necessary and appropriate in order to defend the national security of the United States against the continuing threat posed by the Government of Iraq at that time;
- The Government of Iraq which was in power at the time the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002 was enacted into law has been removed from power and its leader indicted, tried, convicted, and executed by the new freely-elected democratic Government of Iraq;
- The current Government of Iraq does not pose a threat to the United States or its interests; and,
- After more than four years of valiant efforts by members of the Armed Forces and United States civilians, the Government of Iraq must now be responsible for Iraq's future course.

Sec. 3 - Requirement to Reduce the Number of Armed Forces in Iraq and Transition to a Limited Presence of the Armed Forces in Iraq

The bill directs the Secretary of Defense to begin the reduction of the Armed Forces in Iraq beginning no later than 120 days after the enactment of this Act and for the reduction to be completed by April 1, 2008. This legislation requires the reduction in the number of service members in Iraq to occur in a safe and orderly manner to ensure maximum protection of the troops.

Sec. 4 – Comprehensive United States Strategy for Iraq

H.R. 2956 requires the President to report to Congress, by January 1, 2008, on a comprehensive United States strategy for Iraq. The comprehensive strategy must include the following:

- A discussion of United States national security interests in Iraq and the broader Middle East region and the diplomatic, political, economic, and military components of a comprehensive strategy to maintain and advance such interests as the Armed Forces are redeployed from Iraq;
- A justification of the minimum force levels required to protect United States national security interests in Iraq after April 1, 2008, including a description of the specific missions of the Armed Forces to be undertaken. The justification shall include the:

- Projected number of Armed Forces necessary to carry out the missions;
 - Projected annual cost of the missions; and,
 - Expected duration of the missions.
- As part of the justification the President must, at a minimum, address whether it is necessary for the Armed Forces to carry out the following missions:
- Protecting United States diplomatic facilities and United States citizens, including members of the Armed Forces who are engaged in carrying out other missions;
 - Serving in roles consistent with customary diplomatic positions;
 - Engaging in actions to disrupt and eliminate al-Qaeda and its affiliated organizations in Iraq; and,
 - Training and equipping members of the Iraqi Security Forces.
- Specific plans for diplomatic initiatives to engage United States allies and others in the region to bring stability to Iraq.

The bill requires the President to update the comprehensive strategy every 90 days after July 1, 2008, which must include the number of Armed Forces deployed to Iraq and the missions for which such Armed Forces are deployed.

Background

On July 9, 2007, Speaker Pelosi's spokesperson stated: "Speaker Pelosi has said repeatedly her focus is on ending the war in Iraq. She believes that the best way to support our troops in Iraq is to bring them home safely and soon. July will be a month of action in Congress to end the war, including a vote to redeploy our troops by next spring." This bill represents the action of this statement. Rahm Emanuel (D-IL) also had this to say: "Starting in July, we will put the administration and the Republicans to the test. A new direction in Iraq or more of the same of the present force? Vote after vote."

Three times during the 110th Congress, the House of Representatives has directly voted to provide a timeline for the redeployment of troops from Iraq. On May 10, 2007, the House failed to pass H.R. 2237 by a recorded vote of 171 - 255 ([Roll no. 330](#)). The bill would have provided for the withdrawal of troops from Iraq to begin within 90 days of enactment of the bill and would have been completed 120 days after that.

H.R. 1591 required troop withdrawal from Iraq pursuant to benchmarks that were established for the Government of Iraq to meet. If they failed to meet these benchmarks, withdrawal would occur more rapidly. The House passed this bill on March 23, 2007, by a recorded vote of 218-212, 1 present ([Roll no. 186](#)). The Senate also passed this bill with

an amendment on March 29, 2007, by a recorded vote of 51 – 47 ([Record Vote Number: 126](#)).

The House voted on the Motion to Instruct conferees on April 19, 2007. The Motion to Instruct requested that the House conferees insist that the House-passed withdrawal provisions remain in the conference report to H.R. 1591. The House agreed to the Motion to Instruct conferees by a recorded vote of 215 - 199, 1 Present ([Roll no. 235](#)).

On April 25, 2007, the House passed the conference report to H.R. 1591 by a recorded vote of 218 - 208, 2 Present ([Roll no. 265](#)). The Senate then passed the conference report by a recorded vote of 51 - 46. [Record Vote Number: 147](#). The Conference Report accelerated the timetable by which American troops would withdraw from Iraq and imposes funding and tactical restrictions on our commanders on the ground and our troops in the field.

President George Bush vetoed the bill on May 1, 2007.

On January 20, 2007, the President announced a troop “surge” to help control the area around Baghdad and the Anbar Province. The President committed over 20,000 troops for the surge, with the last of these troops arriving in Iraq only 3 week ago.

In response to this surge, Rep. Skelton offered a non-binding resolution, H.Con.Res. 63, which resolved that Congress disapproved of the decision of the President to deploy more than 20,000 additional troops to Iraq. On February 16, the House agreed to the resolution by a recorded vote of 246 - 182 ([Roll no. 99](#)).

During the 109th Congress, the House of Representative rejected a resolution that called for the immediate redeployment of forces from Iraq. H.Res. 571 was rejected by a recorded vote of 3 - 403, 6 Present ([Roll no. 608](#)), on November 11, 2005.

Cost Estimate

The Congressional Budget Office has not scored this legislation.

Staff Contact

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